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## Recent Sixth Grade Language Textbooks

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THE FEBRUARY and March, 1929, issues of THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW carried a report of "Language Text Books: A Study of Five Recent Seventh Grade Texts," this report in its turn having been a follow-up of "A Study of Twenty-Four Recent Seventh and Eighth Grade Language Texts," published five years earlier in *The Elementary School Journal*. This present article presents the results of an analytical study of sixth grade books that have appeared since 1930. It is principally concerned with the emphasis accorded to the various phases of composition and language usage and to progressive tendencies in the teaching of English, only incidental attention being given to comparison with the results of the two previous studies inasmuch as the difference in grade placement of the textbooks concerned makes anything but the grossest of comparisons impossible.

The articles of 1929 were largely comparative in nature so that a resumé of them will include the results of the analyses made in both 1924 and 1929. The following excerpts, therefore, reveal the general nature of the content of language

textbooks that were published between 1920 and 1929. "It is evident that the shift of emphasis is toward an increased stress on grammar-teaching and less on composition-writing. . . . The phases of grammar showing the greatest change in percentage of page-space are: 'word-study and language drill'—more than doubled in the later texts; 'sentence-analysis'—trebled; 'sentences' given but 60% as much space; and 'spelling' half as much as formerly. . . . Considerably increased attention is given to the planning of compositions according to standards. . . . The five (progressive) tendencies mentioned most frequently and treated most intensively are: extension and mastery of vocabulary, creation of the audience situation, drill in the use of mechanically correct written English, utilization of an elaborate technique in teaching composition, and emphasis upon oral composition. . . . Functional grammar and adaptation of procedure to the individual pupil are given but a fair amount of stress. There seems to be little effort to correlate other subjects with language-composition. Spelling is given but minor consideration. Recent texts make almost

no provision for the objective measurement of pupils' abilities and achievements."

Table I is based in part on the progressive tendencies itemized in the study of 1929 and in part on the statements in the prefaces of the most recent books. These statements are the objectives that the au-

thority traits than do the writers of the more recent years. "Vital and natural expressional situations" seems to have lost caste as a specified major objective in the majority of the books, but "adaptation to individual needs" is still pre-eminent. "Independence through self-help features" was mentioned—at least in some measure

TABLE I  
PROGRESSIVE TENDENCIES IN ENGLISH EXPRESSED IN PUBLICATIONS SINCE 1929<sup>1</sup>

	Texts						John- son	1929
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
1. Composition					M			*
a. Drill kept separate from expression.....					M			
b. Vital and natural expressional situations.....					M	M	*	M
c. Use of functional centers.....					M	M	M	
d. Development of ability to think.....	*	*			*	*		
e. Development of leadership.....					*			
f. Development of permanent interests.....					*			
g. Enrichment of experiences.....				M	*		M	
h. Unit organization.....					M	M	M	
i. Correlation of all English subjects.....					M		*	
j. Supervision of English in all classes.....					*			
2. Language								
a. Functional grammar only.....	M	*						*
b. Minimal essentials arranged by grades.....		M			*			*
c. Experimental determination of content.....	*				M			
d. Use of maintenance program.....	M				M	M		
3. Methods								
a. Adaptation to individual needs.....	M	*			M	M	*	M
b. Psychological selection and organization.....					M			
c. Supervised study; laboratory procedure.....				M				
d. Socialized procedure; problems, pupil initiative.....	M	M			M		*	*
e. Use of objective measurements.....	M	M			M		*	*
f. Independence through self-help procedures.....	*	*			M	M	M	*
g. Use of cumulative standards.....				M	M		M	
h. Use of models.....	M						M	

<sup>1</sup> An asterisk indicates a bare mention; M indicates major objectives.

thors have stated to be their criteria in developing instructional materials. The last column in the table shows which of these were indicated by the authors of books published between 1924 and 1929. Apparently authors a few years ago emphasized methods of instruction and gave much less consideration to the thought content of the books, the integration of materials, and the development of per-

—by every author in the older series of books; recent books show an even stronger emphasis on this characteristic. Johnson in an admirable article<sup>2</sup> has itemized significant tendencies characterizing the progressive viewpoint in English instruction. Which of these have been adopted by the writers of recent language

<sup>2</sup> Johnson, Roy Ivan, "The Old and the New in English Instruction," *The Elementary English Review*, January, 1930, pp. 11-15.

textbooks may be noted by studying the column in Table I which is headed by Johnson's name. Self-help, attention to individual needs, the use of cumulative standards and objective measurements, and socialized procedures have been most generally accepted.

Careful inspection of the table will reveal the fact that the first three books have no major mention of the tendencies listed under the subpoint, "Composition." These three books are organized in the traditional separate-lesson manner, whereas the last three are organized in large units based largely on the social studies and natural sciences. Textbook 4 has no detailed preface so that the authors' purposes and criteria are not specifically stated. However, the forewords in textbooks 5 and 6 seemingly indicate that the authors of unit-organized books plan a more functional type of language-expressive activity and aim to develop the abilities and interests of the pupils. Yet they seem to give as much consideration to the tendencies itemized under "Language" and "Methods" as do the writers of the traditional type of books. Whether the unit-organization does yield a distinctive emphasis on certain progressive tendencies may possibly be revealed in subsequent portions of this paper. What authors claim to emphasize may not be objectified in the actual instructional materials.

One measure of the relative emphasis accorded topics is a determination of the percentage of page-space apportioned each topic. Table II presents the results of analyzing the six language-composition textbooks for the sixth grade. The phases of English herein presented are almost identical with those used in the study of 1929. In the more recent investigation, "word study and language drill" has divided into "language drill" and "vocabulary building"; "prose" has been added to "literature"; and "expression"

has not been separately determined because the newer books do not often say in so many words, "Get busy and talk." Therefore, the few instances of giving specific directions to speak or write have been counted as a part of "assignment for written work" or "assignment for oral work."

The technique of the study is exactly the same as that described on pages 45 and 46 of the February, 1929, number of *THE REVIEW*. The same definitions of terms also hold.

The first three columns present the percentages of page-space accorded the various items by the authors of the traditional type of textbooks; the second three, percentages in books of the progressive unit-organization type; the seventh column, the average percentages for the six books combined; and the last column, the average for the books analyzed in the 1929 study. Noting the total percentages for "grammar," "literature," "composition," and "guidance," the reader will perceive that the traditional type of book tends to put much more stress on grammar and correct usage and less on "composition" and "guidance" than does the more progressive type of book. Textbook 6 gives to "literature" much of the space that the other two progressive books give to "guidance," that is, the authors of the series of which textbook 6 is a volume include many excerpts from literature for purposes of enrichment and motivation, evidently with the belief that richness of background and a desire to express one's self will replace much of guidance and specific directions in the planning and expressing of compositions. On the whole, recent sixth-grade books (column seven), give about half of their space to grammar and correct usage, a twelfth to literature, and the rest to composition.

Inspection of the percentages of page-space given to specific phases of English

in the various books reveals great differences in the amount of emphasis assigned by authors. Particularly is this true of the items listed under "grammar." "Parts of speech" and "sentence analysis," which of all these items are the ones that are pure grammar, are cases in point. One book completely omits the former, while

another assigns 15%. "Sentence-analysis" varies from no space to one-eighth of a whole book. In fact, anyone who has worked long days in analyzing the books is left with the impression that the percentages often reflect the pet ideas of the individual authors rather than any authenticated apportioning of emphasis.

TABLE II  
PERCENTAGE OF SPACE GIVEN TO VARIOUS PHASES OF ENGLISH  
In Six Sixth-Grade Language Textbooks Published Since 1929

Phases of English	Texts						Total	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1935	1929
<b>Grammar</b>								
Parts of speech.....	15.3	2.4	6.3	9.9	—	9.3	7.2	16.2
Language drill.....	31.2	11.1	17.9	7.1	8.0	10.2	14.2	14.7
Vocabulary building.....	.8	10.0	7.6	2.3	5.7	3.0	4.9	—
Pronunciation.....	.5	4.6	2.6	—	4.4	.2	2.1	3.6
Punctuation; capitalization.....	6.8	10.8	3.6	6.1	13.7	11.9	8.8	5.6
Sentences, all that pertains to, except 7.....	2.8	8.5	3.6	3.3	3.7	4.7	4.4	7.5
Sentence analysis.....	7.5	—	12.6	6.1	.9	3.0	5.0	8.9
Paradigms.....	—	1.0	—	—	.4	.5	.3	.4
Spelling.....	—	5.5	.3	—	2.7	.7	1.5	1.2
Total.....	64.9	53.9	54.5	34.8	39.5	43.5	48.4	58.1
<b>Literature</b>								
Poems.....	1.7	2.2	1.6	2.8	4.6	7.9	3.5	4.2
Prose.....	—	1.3	.3	6.6	2.3	6.3	2.8	—
Models.....	.5	3.0	—	—	.2	8.1	2.0	4.1
Total.....	2.2	6.5	1.9	9.4	7.1	22.3	8.3	8.3
<b>Composition</b>								
Assignment for written work.....	1.1	2.2	1.6	2.1	2.3	2.1	1.9	1.2
Assignment for oral work.....	2.0	2.2	1.6	1.6	3.4	2.8	2.3	.9
List of topics.....	.3	2.8	2.1	1.9	2.3	3.3	2.1	2.6
Total.....	3.4	7.2	5.3	5.6	8.0	8.2	6.3	4.7
<b>Guidance</b>								
Motivation.....	4.7	3.2	2.6	3.3	6.2	8.4	4.7	2.0
Setting up standards.....	9.2	6.0	6.8	15.1	12.5	3.0	8.8	13.2
Models.....	6.1	12.2	7.4	18.3	14.8	7.2	11.0	5.0
Selecting topics.....	1.4	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.4	1.1	1.1
Organizing.....	4.2	2.2	8.2	3.3	2.0	2.3	3.7	1.7
Expressing.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.2
Appraising.....	1.4	1.6	6.6	2.8	3.4	1.4	2.9	1.9
Revising.....	.3	1.0	1.1	.2	.3	.5	.6	.5
Publishing.....	—	.6	1.1	.5	.7	.9	.6	.9
Use of books.....	2.2	4.6	3.4	5.7	4.5	.9	3.6	2.4
Total.....	29.5	32.4	38.3	50.2	45.4	26.0	37.0	28.9

For instance, one book gives almost a third of its space to "language drill"; another, a tenth to "vocabulary building"; a third book, nearly a fourth to literature and more than a twelfth to "motivation," a large part of this latter being made up of near-literary selections used for purposes of enrichment; and still another, a third of its space to "setting standards" and "models" combined. The reader may continue to make many such comparisons.

The relative emphasis that is generally given to the various phases of English is most easily determined by a study of the seventh column of Table II. In order of size of percentage, the following items rank highest: "language drill," "models," "setting standards," "punctuation," and "parts of speech." It would seem that authors are largely concerned with the formal aspects of language-composition. However, this table does not reveal whether these items are dealt with in a functional way or not. If intimately tied up to expression for well-motivated endeavor to improve, these elements of drill on mechanics and usage deserve emphasis. It would seem that certain phases of guidance are given scarcely enough attention namely, "organizing," "revision," and "publishing," though it may well be that the activity program suggested by the unit-organization type of book will automatically call for these phases of expression, thus releasing authors from the necessity for a mention of them. Certain it is that some of the materials in the book are discrete and non-motivated. How can such materials be guaranteed to be functional?

Some specific phases of English receive varying amounts of emphasis in the traditional, and in the more progressive, type of texts. Traditionally organized books tend to give much more emphasis to correct usage drills, the analysis of sentences, and the organizing of compositions than do the unit-organized books.

On the other hand, the latter type tends to emphasize more practice exercises in punctuation, the inclusion of literature, motivating and setting standards for compositions. Seemingly the progressive types of books do not have so many formalized lessons.

As was said previously, only the most gross of comparisons can be made between the results of this present study and those of 1924 and 1929 as long as there is a difference in grade-placement. However, some comparison may be worthwhile. The following summary list may help.

	PHASES OF ENGLISH		
	1920-	1926-	1930-
	1924	1928	1934
Grammar; usage .....	50.0	58.1	48.4
Literature .....	11.7	8.3	8.3
Composition; study helps ..	38.2	33.6	43.3

Recent sixth grade books give less space to grammar and usage and more to composition than did the earlier seventh grade textbooks. Literature gets about the same amount of attention as formerly. Probably reference to Table II will lend significance to the comparison. On the whole, emphasis as determined by percentage of page-space is about the same for the items included in two studies; that is, in most instances, phases strongly emphasized in the older books tend to be strongly emphasized in the more recent ones, and the same is true of phases given lesser emphasis. However, some items are significantly different. The higher grade-placement probably helps to explain why "parts of speech" and treatment of the sentence were more emphasized in the earlier seventh grade books. The more recent sixth grade books give more space to "language drill" and "vocabulary building," which combined equal 19.1%, to compare with 14.7% in the seventh grade books. The newer books also contain a larger proportion of space assigned to

(Continued on page 100)

# A New Procedure in Teaching Language

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**I**N SEPTEMBER 1933, I introduced in seven first grade classes in the Schenectady Schools, a new procedure in the teaching of spelling, writing, and composition. In June 1935, there were thirty-one first grade teachers and seven second grade teachers carrying on the work. This article is written with the hope that others may be interested in following a like line of educational endeavor and that thus, there may be amassed sufficient data properly to evaluate the same.<sup>1</sup>

It is recognized that so far, the procedure which is described in this article is in a developmental stage, the program having been carried only through the second grade. No dogmatic attitude is assumed as to final values which must await a more extensive use. No doubt any longer remains as to its value and success in the first and second grades. So many encouraging aspects have presented themselves that I do not hesitate to give a preliminary report on this somewhat original educational experience. No one teaching spelling, writing, and composition, as separate subjects, can, in comparison with the procedure to be described, fail to sense the disadvantages in the formal methods and the advantages in the informal.

Teachers have succeeded to a high degree in teaching spelling from text book lists, but after two years of experimental work, allowing children to develop in-

dividual spelling vocabularies through writing that which is vital and of immediate interest to them, it is evident that there are far greater advantages in this informal method.

In this new conception of teaching spelling, writing, and composition, we seek to utilize in the lower grades the same spontaneity with which a child learns in his play by bringing school and life close together. If study is to bring the most desirable results, whole-hearted co-operation and intense interest must come from the child. Study and school must not be separate from life, but a part of it. Through play the child expresses his individual interests. His environment is one that he understands. It is tinged with the glory of new experiences. Creative impulse presses for expression. The young child is eager to express in writing the experiences involved in his world, his make-believe, his games, his home and school experiences, his personal thoughts, feelings, and desires; this tremendous urge is utilized in this procedure.

In the beginning work, even a brief sentence composed by the child represents to him, his story. He likes to have his efforts so labeled, so wonderful do they seem to the author. The story is the child's own creation, and as such gives rise to pride and personal esteem.

The seven first grade teachers who started with this procedure in 1933 worked cautiously and made a careful study and record of each day's development. Each teacher was free to work out

<sup>1</sup> I am especially grateful for the friendly counsel and co-operation of Mrs. W. Howard Pillsbury, formerly Miss Welthie Baker, who, when Director of Elementary Education in the Schenectady Public Schools, did much to make this experiment a success.

her program in a way that seemed most natural and worthwhile. A general plan, however, was used in each classroom.

The development of this work is naturally slow at first, for in the very beginning the children do not write until they have a use for writing or express a desire to learn. Some child may say, "I want my name on my picture," or, "This is a picture of my dog. I can print 'dog' but I can't write it." Occasionally some child enters the first grade knowing how to write some words and wishes to demonstrate his achievement. Always an occasion arises that causes the child to want to learn to write for his immediate use.

From the very beginning the child must be taught to write with ease and rhythm. Careful individual instruction is given and the child practices his word or sentence under supervision until he secures comparatively good letter formation. Then he is ready to start new work. During his first five or six weeks, the child practices on the blackboard, using lines with four or five inches spacing. When children are ready to use paper they start with large sheets, twelve by eighteen inches, with two inch spacing. The spacing is gradually reduced until in grade two, three-quarter inch spacing is used.

After one or two children start to write, others are immediately interested and also seek help. What a different attitude the child has when he asks to be taught as compared to his attitude when assignments are given to him! This work is self-assigned and very patiently and eagerly the child works to master the writing of his first word. It most rooms the children ask for help to write single words first, rather than for assistance in expressing a complete thought. This may be due in part to the difficulty in learning letter forms, all of which are new to the beginner. Such words as *automobile*, *fire engine*, *bicycle*, and *doll carriage* are learned as quickly as short words because

they are interesting to the individual. Interest is the big factor throughout this work.

Naturally the work in one first grade may be quite different from that in another. In one room the children may be interested in writing about some part of the room activity. Thoughts about out-of-door life or home interests may appeal to another. In any case, the richer the room activities, the freer the atmosphere, the greater the sympathy, understanding, and interest of the teacher, the greater is the desire on the part of the child to express himself in writing.

After the child has learned a number of words, he discovers that it is not difficult to express in writing a thought or to write some story. At this point the work grows by leaps and bounds. So eager are the children to write their stories that many seek help before the session opens in the morning. Some write stories at home and bring them to school. As soon as one story is completed the child has another in mind to write. The children enjoy sharing their stories with one another. Each completed story means much to the author. Experience stories are not the only type that children write. Imaginative and creative stories, stories dealing with the room activities, records, diaries, letters to friends and classmates—all these have a part in the written expression.

In the early stages of this development it was decided that children should be expected to master a large part of their attempts. Since spelling, writing, and composition were included in this program, it was decided that teachers should keep in mind certain objectives concerning these subjects.

Mastery, as applied to writing and spelling, infers that the child shall write without help, and with ease, rhythm, acceptable letter formation, and accurate spelling, the words, sentences or paragraphs he attempts to learn. When story

writing is started, the child masters the placing of the title, the indentation, margins, capitalization, and punctuation in each composition.

While numerous investigators have determined the words of highest frequency which children in given grades should learn to spell, experience has proven that as isolated words many of these are meaningless to the young child, and as spelling, hold little interest for him. In the new procedure the child is led to write correctly the words for which he has immediate need, rather than isolated words taken from textbooks. Each child builds his own spelling vocabulary through use. Therefore, each child is held responsible for mastering the words he uses in his expression. During the first year, the teacher keeps a record of each child's spelling vocabulary. The child also has his own spelling booklet, and takes great pleasure in watching his list grow from week to week. No two children have identical lists, although the more common words necessary for expression, such as *want*, *bad*, *like*, *little*, *my*, and *play* may occur on many lists.

Beginning in grade 2-B (the first half of the second grade), the children make individual dictionaries, placing each new word beginning with "A" on the A page, etc. This is a beginning in the teaching of dictionary habits. When the child is ready to record his new words in his dictionary, he finds the pages on which they are to be written, and takes the book to his teacher in order that his work may be checked.

While there is no place for spelling as such, and no special penmanship drill lesson, there is a place for individual drill work. The child has a most favorable attitude toward this work. It is a kind of drill that functions and has meaning to him. He feels the immediate need for it and because he does, it is done willingly and persistently. However, there has been

far less drill, since children tend to do well that in which they are so vitally interested.

The children seem to be anxious to have accurate spelling. They seldom write words without being positive that they know the correct form. No careless habits have developed.

The spelling results have been checked in the classes using this procedure. In no case has any child mastered fewer words than he would have in the more formal spelling. On the other hand, children have mastered more, and in about 50% of the cases, from two to five times as many words have been learned. A spelling conscience is developed in a natural way.

The penmanship has been most satisfactory from the beginning. Although very little formal drill has been given, the increased amount of story writing has not been a handicap to good penmanship. Large writing is used in these lower grades, and much writing is done on the blackboard. Teachers have been guided by the following penmanship principles: right habits in personal posture; desirable positions and handling of materials; increasingly improved letter forms; rhythm; and attainment of reasonable speed. These are given attention as individuals need them.

Never have we had such natural, spontaneous, vital written composition as we have had in our first and second grades during these two years. The more formal teaching of spelling and penmanship that was formerly done in the first and second grades was not a help to composition. Somehow, the formal spelling drill seemed to crush interest or hinder the child from using the richer vocabulary which his background, environment, and experiences were already helping him to build. In the new procedure, originality and individuality seem to have far greater play. The child with creative ability has

much more opportunity to express his thoughts. He is not hampered by a curriculum in which he has had no choice.

Such language forms as placing of title, margins, indentation, and capitalization are often mastered in grade 1-A. There has been far less difficulty with punctuation and sentence structure.

When a child has something he wants very much to express, there is no place for such discussion as, "Did the writer stick to his topic?" or, "Did he have good beginning and ending sentences?" These are taken care of because of the child's intense interest. He naturally tells his story in a logical, interesting manner.

In several of the classrooms the children's compositions, many of which are illustrated, have been put in booklet form. This gives the teacher an opportunity to check the growth in each individual's work. The children nearly wear these booklets out reading each other's stories.

Note the child-like interest in these first grade stories.

#### MY GOLD RING

My ring has R C on it. That means Robert Ciasuolo. My godmother gave it to me.

Grade 1-A

#### MY VIOLIN

I practice very hard on my violin. I want to play my violin just like Rubinoff.

Grade 1-A

#### TAG'S PUPPIES

Last night my big dog had four puppies. I like the black and white one best. I want it to stay small because I can play with little dogs better than big ones.

Note the appreciation of nature in this:

#### WATER LILIES

I have four water lilies in my pool. They close up at six o'clock. In the morning they open again. They are like people because they close their eyes at night and wake up in the morning.

There is much freedom of expression in these first grade stories.

#### THE SNOWMAN

One day I made a snowman and it broke down! Boom!  
And daddy made it up again! Oh!

Grade 1-A

#### MY SKIS

I went down on my skis  
And landed on a stump!  
Bump! Bump!

Grade 1-A

#### OLD MR. WIND

Old Mr. Wind, you naughty old fellow!  
You give me freckles!

Grade 1-A

#### THE LITTLE GIRL

One day I met a little girl. She was hot.  
She had a coat on her. I said, "Take off that  
coat." Her name is Joan. I like her.

Grade 1-A

The second grade stories denote growth in many ways.

#### A NEW DRESS

My little sister, Anna May, has a new dress. It is brown and white. It has two brown bows on it. She likes it very much. She has brown ankle socks to match her new dress. She has brown curly hair. She does not wear a ribbon because her hair is very beautiful.

Grade 2-A

There is always a great variety in the topics used in the composition. No two stories are ever alike. There is no monotony for either teacher or child. In this expression, the child paints with words, pictures of life as he sees, feels, and lives it day by day, full of eagerness, joy, and thrills that each new experience brings to him. One visitor remarked after visiting a classroom, "Their stories tell one so much about themselves, their homes, their background and environment." Such information is, of course, of great value to the teacher.

Wrapped up in this written expression is the teacher's opportunity to teach spelling, writing, and composition, each being accomplished without the child's realization that he is learning subject mat-

# Achievements in English in Activity Programs

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**A**CHARACTERISTIC practice of the newer-type elementary schools is to integrate curricular activities around a center of interest, unit of work, or topic. Integration is emerging as an educational-psychological concept from several directions, but it is most apparent in the *Gestalt* psychological viewpoint. The theory is that pupils perceive more clearly ideas and their relationships which are unified in a major theme or topic, and that the study of ideas and relationships gives to the pupil deeper meanings and helps to create broader educational values. Thus growth in oral expression, reading, and spelling may develop from activities intrinsic to a unit or center.

In the primary grades, for example, pupils may dictate to the teacher a story of experiences about a visit to the farm or market. The teacher guides the discussion and writes the pupils' dictation on the board. The dictation is then used for reading and spelling activities. In the upper elementary grades the major activities in oral and written expression, reading, and spelling may develop around a unit on lumbering, colonial life, or some other topic. Individualized materials of instruction in the instrumental subjects comprise a minor part of the program.

A characteristic practice of the older-type elementary school curriculum is traditional subject-matter divisions. Growth in oral and written expression, reading, and spelling develops from a curriculum of separate subjects with little, if any,

planned relationships. The emphasis is placed upon the acquisition of minimum essentials of skills, habits, and information in the basic subjects. The psychological viewpoint is mechanistic in the development of habits of piecemeal learning through largely unrelated curricular activities.

Do the primary and upper elementary grade pupils under the newer-type practices compare favorably with similar pupils under older-type practices in skills of reading such as word meaning, paragraph meaning, and vocabulary? How do pupils in these types of schools compare in achievement of language usage and spelling?

In order to obtain tentative answers to these questions, The Metropolitan Achievement Tests, Primary II Battery, Form A, were administered to pupils in the second and third grades of each type of school. The tests used were reading completion, paragraph reading, vocabulary, language usage, and spelling. In the upper elementary grades the Stanford Achievement Battery, Form W, consisting of paragraph reading, word meaning, and language usage was administered.

Seventy-four primary pupils were equated on the bases of intelligence, chronological age, and socio-economic status. Intelligence was measured by the Detroit First-Grade Intelligence Test. Chronological age was expressed in months. Socio-economic status was measured by a special social background data

sheet. The average intelligence quotients for newer-type and older-type schools are respectively 103.4 and 103.5 with standard deviations of 18.1 each. Chronological ages are 98.02 and 97.3 months with standard deviations of 10.2 and 9.6. Socio-economic status scores are 19.9 and 19.8 with standard deviations of 8.3 and 8.8.

The comparisons of achievement of the equated primary pupils are presented in Table I. The average scores are expressed in terms of grade norms. In the interpre-

months) of a school year. The standard error of this superiority is .15, and the ratio of .7 to 1.5 is 4.7. This superiority is too large to be due solely to errors in sampling. In a like manner, all other tests indicate superior achievement by pupils in the newer-type schools, and the superiority is statistically significant.

The comparisons in mastery of English skills were carried into the upper elementary grades of the newer and older schools. One hundred and twenty-three

TABLE I  
COMPARATIVE ACHIEVEMENT IN SKILLS OF ENGLISH BY EQUATED PRIMARY  
PUPILS IN NEWER AND OLDER TYPE SCHOOLS

Schools	Pupils	Average Scores	Difference of Averages	S E diff.	Ratio
Reading Completion					
Newer type.....	74	3.29			
Older type.....	74	2.59	.70	.15	4.67
Paragraph Meaning					
Newer type.....	74	3.33			
Older type.....	74	2.59	.74	.13	5.69
Vocabulary					
Newer type.....	74	2.99			
Older type.....	74	2.36	.63	.16	3.94
Language Usage					
Newer type.....	66	3.33			
Older type.....	66	2.65	.68	.11	6.18
Spelling					
Newer type.....	66	2.89			
Older type.....	66	2.47	.42	.13	3.23

tation of the reading completion test, for instance, one reads that in the newer-type schools 74 pupils attained an average grade score of 3.29. (third grade and almost three months) as compared with a grade score of 2.59. (second grade and almost six months) for the older-type schools.

An inspection of test results in Table I shows that equated primary pupils in newer-type schools achieve consistently superior skills in English activities of reading, language usage, and spelling. In reading completion the newer-type pupils attained a superiority of .7 (seven

pupils were equated in these grades. The average IQ's obtained from the National Intelligence Test were 108 with standard deviations of 12.2. The average chronological ages, expressed in months, were 133.7 and 134.9 with standard deviations of 15.1 and 15.4. In socio-economic status the pupils of both types of schools had average scores of 19.9 and 19.8 with standard deviations of 8.3 and 8.8.

In paragraph meaning, word meaning, and language usage the comparisons in achievement for fourth, fifth, and sixth grade pupils were made from results of the Stanford Achievement Tests. The

average scores are expressed in terms of crude scores of the several tests. Comparative data are presented in Table II.

An inspection of test results in Table II indicates that equated upper elementary pupils in newer-type schools achieve slightly superior skills in paragraph meaning, word meaning, and language usage skills. The ratios of the difference of average scores to the standard error of the

skills was maintained in the upper elementary grades. The sampling of different situations has been admittedly small, hence tentative rather than final conclusions should be drawn from the data.

A major hypothesis is implicit in the findings of this study. The newer practices are as adequate a medium as the older practices for the acquisition of skills and habits in various aspects of English

TABLE II  
COMPARATIVE ACHIEVEMENT IN SKILLS OF ENGLISH BY EQUATED UPPER ELEMENTARY  
PUPILS IN NEWER AND OLDER TYPE SCHOOLS

Schools	Pupils	Average Scores	Difference of Averages	S E diff.	Ratio
Paragraph Meaning					
Newer type.....	123	74.36			
Older type.....	123	72.76	1.60	2.12	.75
Word Meaning					
Newer type.....	123	74.10			
Older type.....	123	71.92	2.18	1.93	1.13
Language Usage					
Newer type.....	93	73.53			
Older type.....	93	67.18	6.35	2.93	2.17

difference are below 3.0 and, therefore, the superior achievement is not statistically significant at these grade levels. The fact is fairly well established by these data, however, that newer-type schools attain English skills equal to those attained by the older-type schools.

A tentative answer has been provided to the questions of relative achievement in skills of reading, language, and spelling by pupils under older and newer-type practices. The evidence here reported shows that superior achievement was tested in the primary grades and that equal, if not superior, attainment in the

such as reading, language usage, and spelling. The central units or topics of work do not necessarily detract from achievement in instrumental skills in academic areas of the curriculum. If the teacher wisely guides the pupils' interests and activities, a progressive and integrated development of broad experience with related skills in reading, language, and spelling ensues. Although the newer-type schools devote less time than the older-type schools to actual drills on instrumental skills and habits, the results show that the newer practices provide essential mastery of language techniques.

# Paths to the Show Window

JEANETTE EATON \*

WHY IS industry so fascinating to certain people who know nothing about it—children, artists, and writers in particular? Do they throb to its rhythm or admire its accomplishments or merely marvel over mechanism as they might over a geyser or some other phenomenon of nature?

Often during the last three years have I asked myself these questions. Perhaps the response defies analysis. But the fact remains that to instinctive people the giant workshop is not only vastly interesting, but endowed with a certain romance and a curious beauty. For this reason there seemed a possible appeal to boys and girls in such a book as *Behind the Show Window*.

Of course, nothing in print could be a substitute for personal excursions to farms and mills. A mere descriptive portrayal of processes would be worth neither writing nor reading. On the other hand, to be on the spot is by no means to understand what is going on. The present system of production and distribution is so enormously complicated that any clear conception of how it works, even in one concrete instance, requires study. Here a book may help. What I intended was to make young people yearn to find out about their own modern world and to suggest how they could do so.

The path to this type of learning has few guide posts. Books on economic theory abound. So do works on the effect of this mechanical age upon the human race. But if a youngster wants to know in

detail how a bottle of pasteurized milk gets to his own doorstep, he will have to dig up the information himself. If he wants to follow the steps by which he is clothed and housed, he must go, not to the library, but to the market place.

Certainly that was what I was forced to do. My own plunge into this uncharted realm was due to a long series of articles I wrote for the *Pictorial Review* addressed to the consumer. I had to find out what determines quality in textiles, household apparatus and food stuffs. When I first began my work, I went straight to the New York Public Library to consult Miss Jenny Flexner, the Reader's Adviser. And I remember her saying, "Why, you are asking the impossible. I doubt if any library has stocked up with the sort of material you want."

She was right. A great deal of such information exists in print. But it is in the form of trade booklets and journals, government reports and scattered studies made here and there by university groups and official bureaus. During the two years of my magazine series I collected my own library on a scale quite unsuited to a small city apartment. I practically had to sleep on a bed of pamphlets and hang my hat on a file case.

It is interesting to note that already a number of these reports are out of date. Because industry and agriculture are part of the very flow of life, what was true of them yesterday is modified by what was invented or discovered today. For this very reason such investigations are excellent training for boys and girls. Since no cut and dried information is available, initiative and the zest for research have to be stimulated. The necessary facts

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are fresh and possessed of a local flavour. They must be collected, not merely learned.

Moreover, inasmuch as such an enterprise is too large for one individual, it lends itself perfectly to a group project. Suppose, for example, a class decided to make a thorough report on the source and sale of meat in the community. Everyone can bring in a distinct contribution. While one group looks up the history of the meat industry in this country, another can outline the laws and statutes regulating sanitary conditions all along the route from slaughter house to home kitchen, and point out any holes in the existing system of inspection. Quite a different aspect of the subject is the quality of meat. The students must find out what the industry is doing to improve quality and what are the guides to intelligent selection of cuts. Other members of the class can investigate the basis of prices.

To assemble definite, first-hand facts about one single business throws a ray of light upon the entire business structure of the nation. The student is led back from the familiar corner store through the wholesale house to the factory and farm. On the way he encounters the storage plant and transportation facilities. He also stubs his toe on a lot of sprawling roots and realizes that much of the business practice of today goes deep into our national soil. For example, he discovers with amusement why lamb has to be sold largely in certain sections of the country. But he is shocked to grasp the dreadful truth that, as our system works now, a cattle rancher profits more by limiting his herd than by raising enough pigs and cows to supply meat plentifully for all.

My own studies have convinced me that intelligence about industry makes critics rather than radicals. As I went about the country from glorious fruit ranch in California to linoleum factory in New Jer-

sey, from federal laboratory in Washington to the purchasing department of a Boston store, I met critics of modern business everywhere. No so-called "red" is half so effectively vocal against the faults of our times as are research workers and managers in business. They hate having to hold back production and suffer when a job is less good than it should be. They lose sleep over the necessity of discharging workers or cutting pay. Yet not one of them wants private business to disappear. They hold no grudge against capitalism. What they long for is to establish fair play all around within the limits of a profit-making economy.

Whether this ideal is possible must depend largely on the business men of the future. If they care more for justice than money, we may attain a healthy condition in business without killing the patient. For this reason, it is important that young people who will one day be responsible for economic affairs should have some practical understanding of them. Whoever really gets the picture of the way industry has developed in our country finds it impossible to cherish bitterness about its faults. These have grown up beside the marvelous technical triumphs of which we are so proud. If boys and girls learn to hate the evil practice without blame for the people who profit from it, then they will erect the foundation for constructive thinking.

It seems to me obvious that the consumer's point of view—the one exclusively adopted in my book—is the young person's right approach to economics. Nowadays politics and economics are confused because it is not understood that human rights are one thing and the laws of economy, another. Even experts have no clear idea how economic forces might be controlled for the real good of society and the individual. But from all this tangle, the consumer stands free. There is noth-

ing vague or obscure about his effort to obtain the best possible article for his money. There is nothing abstract in his desire to know why he cannot get a square deal. Naturally, because he himself is a consumer, the school boy can start from his own experience and blaze a little trail through the thicket of facts and theories.

Suppose the class report on meat shows that it is a superbly organized industry which furnishes a clean, high-quality product to the consumer. Suppose everyone agrees that the only thing to be desired is a price low enough to bring meat within the range of very small incomes. Then perhaps for the first time these youngsters will begin to count the threads in our commercial fabric. They will add up the items which make the cost of meat—from the rancher's taxes to the local butcher's rent. They will face the fact that until all American families are supported by wages sufficient to buy meat, the farmer cannot afford to raise enough to reduce the price. And so these students will see that the consumer is related to the worker on the one hand and the producer on the other, to his own city and state and to all the people in the world. He realizes that what happens in Germany and Russia has a direct influence on his own spending power.

In short, from such a concrete study a perspective will emerge. After a year's work the young consumers may say, "Yes, now we see what is wrong, how can it be set right?" Then the teacher should feel a deep sense of satisfaction, for this question is never asked in despair, but always in hope. And, although there is no glib and easy answer to it—perhaps in our lifetime no answer at all, but only a series of experiments to watch—the very fact that it will live in young hearts offers a wonderful promise for the future. Once enough people really care about finding

that answer, hates, prejudice and greed will be confronted with a potent force. Even the most, entrenched interests tremble before an aroused group of intelligent consumers. The consumer's real enemies are not to be found in the business world. They are his own apathy and indifference.

It strikes me that the consumer's position is a grand one from which to view the world. It is democratic and objective, pacific and international. It is concerned with the very stuff of life itself and yet partakes rather of the philosopher's calm than of the reformer's urge. True, discontent with a situation may reach the boiling point. Witness the group of women—wasn't it in Chicago?—who yelled and threw rocks in protest against high prices of food-stuffs. But the delightful part of that story was the way it was reported. Nobody started an investigation into the Bolshevik tendency undermining American homes. Nobody spoke of these women as part of the "Red" peril or as a menace to society. No, indeed. They were sympathetically presented as housewives. They were out to feed their men and their little ones and even conservatives looked on with fellow feeling. The consumer is the being with whom we are all identified. If his patience is exhausted, he is not blamed. Editors, business men, and government officials alike merely realize that a hint has come from the wise.

There are edifying stories galore about the effective action of consumer groups. I wish some class would collect them from the nooks and corners of the journals where they appear. We need the encouragement they offer. When we learn that a community has quietly forced a public utility to reduce its rates or when we read of a group engaged in co-operative purchasing, we take fresh hope. One deed is worth a bushel of theories. Despite the complication, we may not be so helpless

as we fear. Just let consumer courses be taught in the schools and the housewives of the future may not be forced to throw rocks. The "electric eye" which performs so many marvels at present may some day be rivalled in power by the consumer's

eye. It fixes on some commercial malpractice and lo! the evil disappears.

Why should this be merely a pleasant dream? Why isn't it moral Evolution? After all, the good of the consumer is the good of the human race.

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### RECENT SIXTH GRADE LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS

(Continued from page 89)

motivation, models, and directions for organizing compositions and for appraising them. It is interesting to note that the newer books do give somewhat greater emphasis to oral composition than to written composition, though none of the authors mentions his doing so as an aim, whereas the writers of the older books actually gave more space to written composition while stating in the preface that oral composition would be more emphasized.

#### Summary

Writers of recent sixth grade textbooks in language-composition claim to emphasize most the adaptation to individual needs, socialized procedures, self-help features to develop independence, and the use of objective tests and cumulative standards. The prefaces of the progressive unit-organization books indicate that such books should be valuable in utilizing natural and vital expressional situations, in enriching experience, and in developing certain personal traits. The analysis of the page-space assigned to the various phases of English throws some light on the problem of whether the books actually will

help the pupils to attain what authors claim they should.

Evidently authors of recent books in language-composition do attempt to enrich experience, to build up appreciation of literature, to develop correct usage and mastery of written mechanics, and to set up standards and objectify them by an abundant use of models. Books organized into large units tend to give less attention to correct usage and more to literature, to motivating materials and to standards than do the traditionally organized books. The fluctuation in relative emphasis given to a specific phase of English from book to book leads one to conclude that we do not yet know what phases should be most or least emphasized. Individual authors follow their own inclinations in according emphasis.

Page-spacing gives little clue as to how effective teaching based on the books will be or what progressive tendencies are featured. The second half of this paper will present an analysis to determine the types and relative prevalence of progressive procedures which have been included in recent sixth grade books.

# Research Problems in Reading in the Elementary School\*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

It is the purpose of this Bulletin to suggest problems and techniques for research in elementary school reading. While it is desirable to indicate the accomplishments and conclusions of research, it is equally important to study the inadequacies in our knowledge of many major elements of reading instruction. It would be unfortunate to standardize our practice in reading on the basis of principles that had not been thoroughly evaluated.

Gray (49),<sup>1</sup> in the first of his summaries of reading investigations (1925) listed 436 articles and monographs. Since that time he has reported 985, an average of approximately 100 each year. One might be led to expect from this amount of research activity that the large number of problems in the teaching of reading would be solved or at least clarified. It is the peculiar nature of research, however, that with every tentative finding more problems and combinations of problems are uncovered. Instead of a diminution of fields for investigation due to the large amount of research, we find an increasingly large number of unsolved problems.

Research in psychology and education is in its infancy. We have as yet no satisfactory measures of many of the outcomes of teaching such as initiative, voluntary habits, interests, and the like. We

have no measures of the amount and type of imagery and associations made by any reader. Our tests are relatively insensitive to small units of progress. As yet, there has been no objective evidence which demonstrates the existence, nature, and relationships of various types of skills in middle grade reading. We are becoming increasingly aware of individual differences, but there is little knowledge of their causes and what should be done about them. These problems are much more difficult than those in the field of natural sciences. Elements of behavior or mental content are influenced by great numbers of associational elements, psychological and physiological. The mental make-up of each individual is unique and does not remain the same from day to day. In view of the complexity, number, and importance of the problems it is worthwhile to note, in the following table, the relatively small number of major investigations related to reading as reported by Good (48) in his annual summary of doctorate theses under way in education.

DOCTORATE THESES ON ELEMENTARY READING

Year	Total no. of doctor's theses	Doctor's theses on reading
1931	587	11
1932	468	8
1933	404	8
1934	457	9
1935	483	16

The sections of this Bulletin deal with reading readiness, primary grade problems, middle grade problems, miscellane-

\* The Fourth Annual Bulletin of the National Conference on Research in Elementary School English.

<sup>1</sup> Parenthetical numbers refer to Studies listed in the Bibliography, page 21ff.

ous problems, and suggestions for research. No attempt was made to present an exhaustive bibliography in each of the fields. Every available research report which was listed in the various bibliographical sources was reviewed<sup>2</sup> and the selection was made primarily upon the suitability of the reference for demonstrating the type of research or the problems involved in the particular field it covered. A large amount of excellent research was necessarily omitted. The responsibility for the inclusion of materials rests entirely with the chairman of the committee on the preparation of the Bulletin. The co-operation of several research centers in sending abstracts of unpublished research is acknowledged elsewhere.

In order to obtain reports of reading research in progress, a letter was sent to individual faculty members in every institution in the United States which had one or more listings of reading research in the United States Bureau of Education *Bulletins of Research Studies in Education*. Sixteen reports of research in progress were returned. Twenty-two institutions reported no research in progress.

It is obvious that instruction in reading cannot be suspended until complete knowledge is available of the relative merits of methods and materials. An excellent summary of tentative conclusions from research on which reading instruction may be based is found in the bulletin, *Better Reading Instruction*, Research Bulletin No. 5, Research Division of the National Education Association, November, 1935.

The following persons contributed abstracts of unpublished research, reports

of research in progress, suggestions for research problems, or advice in regard to organization of the Bulletin: Dr. A. I. Gates, Teachers College, Columbia University; Dr. E. W. Dolch, University of Illinois; Dr. A. R. Mead, University of Florida; Dr. W. S. Gray, University of Chicago; Dr. Paul R. Hanna, Stanford University; Dr. Ernest Horn, Dr. H. A. Greene, and Miss Maude McBroom, University of Iowa; Dr. E. A. Betts, State Normal School, Oswego, New York; Dr. T. H. Eames, Boston University; and Dr. B. R. Buckingham, Ginn and Company.

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## II. READING READINESS

In a survey involving 39,102 first grade children, Reed (83) found that 18.5% failed to be promoted. That this amount of failure is not unusual may be confirmed by examining school reports or standard test surveys of any city. Since it is desirable to provide success for every child in beginning reading, many studies have been directed toward the problem of reading readiness.

Some evidence on each of three specific problems in reading readiness is summarized here.

### *Problems investigated*

1. What level of mental maturity is required for success in first grade reading? The studies of Arthur (1) and Morphett and Washburne (74) produce evidence that success in reading improves with the mental maturity of the child. There were few failures among children with a mental age of six years six months and very few successes among children with men-

tal ages under five years five months. Six years six months was considered a desirable mental age standard for admission to the first grade.

Several investigations show that children with mental ages under six years can learn to read. Davidson (22) reports the progress in reading of 14 children with mental ages of four. Bright children with a mental age of four made good progress. McElwee (69) and Gates (41) report success in reading among dull children whose mental ages fall below six years. The prevalence of difficulties in reading among children who have mental ages considerably over six years indicates that mental age is not a guarantee of success in reading. See the study by Monroe (72).

Intelligence tests, especially of the group test variety, are unreliable at the kindergarten age for any individual child. This is shown by any mental test study on children where two or more mental tests are given. Even the Stanford-Binet shows evidence of marked variation due to environmental influences. See Wellman (102).

While intelligence tests correlate well with success in reading, (Deputy [25], Monroe [72]) and their use is justified in the absence of better measures, it is evident that they are not the final answer to the problem of reading readiness. Mental age alone is not an assurance of success in reading. A low mental age does not always mean failure.

A chief defect of the intelligence test as a measure of reading readiness is that it is not diagnostic. It does not tell what may be done for the children who score below the required standard for success in reading. The assumption is that nothing can be done except to wait until the mental age reaches the accepted standard. However, intelligence tests are measures of general achievement rather than of the physiological maturity of the nervous

# Writing Experiences of Elementary Children\*

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THE EXPERIENCES of the school child so largely depend upon his teacher that before we can enter into this discussion, we need to analyze our position in the English classroom. Only in recent years have we agreed that we are guides, not taskmasters, leaders, not drill-sergeants. Therefore, we ask ourselves: What is the destination in the field of elementary written composition? Where do we wish our young travellers to arrive? What do we hope for them?

On the answer to these questions we seem fairly well-agreed. We wish the pupil to have many rich and varied and pleasurable experiences in writing. We do not hesitate to undertake to supply him with much material in the way of exciting first-hand knowledge and to open the door to a vast region of delight through our skill in making the vicarious experience truly his. We want first of all to help him think clearly and feel deeply, and then to be confident that what he thinks and feels is worth expressing. We hope that he will learn to look upon writing both as a tool capable of serving in varying degrees of efficiency in a social situation and as a medium of releasing his innermost self—his thoughts, feelings, desires, ambitions—in a way that is satisfactory to him and enjoyable to the world at large, if he wishes to share this expression. We expect him to have a genuine respect for the conventions of written language, and to have acquired some definite habits in the mechanics of writing

which will serve him well throughout his days. And we hold as highly desirable that he grasp the power of words in this queer world in which he is called upon to live, that he may learn to love them with his whole heart, feel them friendly, forceful, obedient, and realize in some degree their abundance. But knowing the destination does not insure arrival; by-paths are many and inviting. How shall we make sure that we have selected the best possible route, avoiding useless detours and aimless side-trips?

Here our answer is not quite so confident, for it is not always easy in practice to carry out the principles which we accept readily in theory.

We see the need of providing two kinds of opportunities for expression; the first centers in the genuine need for expression inherent in a dynamic situation which arises anywhere and at any time during the school day. It will take one of the forms usually listed as a functional center: the story of personal experience, letters, notes, requests, invitations, reports, possibly in the form of minutes or paragraphs of explanation, note-taking, news articles, the keeping of records and forms.

But in this phase of writing several problems are involved. The real demand for writing does not occur often enough to insure the fixing of any one form or any one skill. What shall we do? I am not sure that I know what should be done, but I know what *is* done. Here is an illustration of teacher ingenuity in meeting this problem.

\* An address delivered at the conference on elementary English held under the auspices of the National Council of Teachers of English, July 2, 1935.

It is tradition for our 6-A class to write the official letters which represent the school. Toward the close of the year the members of the class wished to write a thank-you letter to a friend of the school who had been instrumental in securing two flags for school use. No one in the class knew the address. The simple thing was to send a messenger to the office to make the inquiry. The teacher, however, said frankly, "We haven't had half enough practice in writing business letters. Let's write a formal letter to Miss Holmes asking for the information." Now what children brought up under today's freedom should have said was, "Not on your life! Why should we write and write and write when we can get the information in less than a minute?" But they didn't. Is this a horrible arraignment of the school or a tribute to the dynamic power of the teacher? When natural situations fail, we create artificial ones. Perhaps the frank explanation that we needed further practice, combined with humorous procedure of writing when talking would be easier, proved the saving grace. Pupils have inherited a real respect for the work of each grade. They really wish to qualify. If business letters are assigned, most of them see no reason why business letters shouldn't be practiced. Perhaps, too, situations are not so artificial to children as they are to the initiated teacher.

A second problem lies in the fact that our need for oral expression in the classroom is much greater than our need for writing—the proportion being far more than the accepted three-fifths oral to two-fifths written. In meeting this we find the ingenious teacher using the same material in two forms with two highly different purposes.

Here is a class that has thoroughly enjoyed the production of its own play: "The Coming of the Law to Early Denver." Writing experiences have been short; the teacher skillfully plants books

of plays on the library shelf and table. When she makes the suggestion (and in this case it had to come from her), pupils agree that that play is too good to be lost, that others would surely enjoy reading it, and are off on the production of a book—the sole purpose of which in the teacher's eyes is to provide another writing experience with the drill involved properly motivated. This is one instance in which an oral language experience can justifiably be used for writing.

The preponderance of explanation if we base our response on class needs and not life needs presents a problem—one which has been met in a degree by the illustration given. The clever teacher must create a demand for other forms in which this factual material can be used. The first-person narrative, the diary, the play, the word-picture, the poem utilize material which was originally explanatory.

The third problem, which is of huge proportions, centers in our desire to instill a proper respect for the conventions of form. Today's standards of achievement are not high. The merchant wishes trade; consequently, he'll manage to read the order written on a grubby scrap of paper with a stub of a pencil. It might not mean anything to us but it says *butter, eggs, and soup-bone* to him because it touches his pocket-book. What does the firm care if the letter is ungrammatical and almost illegible when a check is enclosed? Did you ever fail to make the attempt to read any communication sent directly to you?

Here in my hand is Exhibit A. It is a letter written by the mother of a family in my school. It is almost illegible, the spelling is frightful, the paper is wholly unacceptable, but I read it. Furthermore, I answered it. There is no reason whatever for this adult to feel that her ability to write is not just what it should be. And that is precisely how she does feel as her letter shows. Here it is:

Miss homes hav you a tiperiter i Can Bory  
for a while Please i ame ritting a story and  
hont aBle to get one if i have eny luck i  
will By me one tell oPle and she Cane tell me

Mrs Smith

The writer of this letter has a most astounding skill in oral expression. In discussing her two daughters with me, she once said, "Opal must have some public speaking, for she is so shy; but Mildred never met a stranger."

Can you, with all your education, find four words which describe the expansive nature of the little girl whose attitude is reflected in the friendliness of everyone she contacts? I can't. But the mother did in her, "She never met a stranger."

How shall we bring into the pupil's life an appreciation of the difference between writing that merely serves its purpose, that achieves a desired result, and the writing that is not only utilitarian but beautiful—beautiful because of the precision with which words have been selected and fitted to their places, because of the perfection with which ideas have been developed and organized? The difference is precisely that between the ramshackle old car held together by jittering bolts and rusty wires and the perfected streamline model. Yet both go from here to there, both cover the ground. But alas! this kind of recognition doesn't have to be taught!

Our responsibility is really greater in the field of written language than in the oral, for the nineteen hours spent away from the school are much less likely to nullify or counteract the effect of our teaching of written composition than of oral since the impact is less frequent. The use of self-help questions, the frequent opportunity to see sets of papers that have a nice observance of form, the gradual development of power to evaluate work in terms of definite standards, the growing consciousness that these standards enter into the final judgment of the

class as to which paper shall be sent to the newspaper, which letter shall be posted—these are all instrumental in securing the desired end. There is no known shortcut.

The time-honored question as to teacher correction of written work raises its head at this point. The answer lies in the teacher's developing skill in selecting pupils who need drill upon specific points. It is a comparatively simple matter to eliminate pupils who do not need drill if the teacher has trained himself to note outstanding faults or the presence of one type-error by a quick scrutiny of a set of papers. We have learned that material developed from subject matter with which the child is familiar is more interesting to him than unrelated and meaningless sentences. I have never seen this effect scientifically measured but I should like to. I think of a delightful lesson in the 4-B of the use of end punctuation based on the story of cotton.

After a discussion of the two principal purposes of sentences—telling and asking, and an identification of the punctuation required—the teacher presented ten declarative sentences, drawn from the social science unit in use, which were to be changed to interrogative form. Here are samples:

There are many pickers on the plantations.  
They fill their baskets and sing while they work.  
Cotton is more commonly used than wool, linen,  
or silk.

This was followed by directions to punctuate properly a group of sentences in which the purpose was varied; and the third step demanded that end punctuation be placed in a paragraph free from punctuation.

The second field of expression is that which we commonly call the creative. I enter upon this discussion with much greater confidence—a confidence born, I am sure, of our little knowledge of the

creative possibilities inherent in our pupils and of our brief acceptance of the responsibility for bringing them into being. There have been so many attempts to define the word *creative* in recent years that there may be some disagreement with my use of it. I have grouped for the purposes of our discussion such writing as is strongly individual. I have one limitation in my thinking in that the purely creative must draw upon the imagination and the emotions.

Most treatments of the subject state that we must provide stimuli for creative expression; it seems to me that we can scarcely evade this. There isn't a moment in the school day which could not be utilized in this fashion. But we do need to see that these desirable stimuli are recognized. Children are children, and the door must often be opened before they are aware that it exists. We almost missed a delightful opportunity recently.

Late in May we had a most successful Field Day. To an adult the scene was wholly charming. Five hundred children of from five to twelve years engaged in running, high jumping, hurdling, throwing, playing competitive games suggest a dynamic power that makes one gasp. And despite one's personal feelings as to the growth of the nudist movement the small child in backless shorts is delightful. The day passed, but as I enjoyed the scene in retrospection, it occurred to me that here was meat for poetry. Teachers agreed and suggested to children that they try to put down on paper what they had seen and felt during the play. The efforts proved most worthwhile, and the experience of reading the efforts of practically every child from the third grade to the sixth was truly encouraging to one whose major interest is in English.

Here is a boy who had just returned to school after a serious illness. From necessity, he sat on the side lines. Didn't he get a little of his feeling into his story?

#### LOOKING ON

They have set their mark; they are ready to run.

Oh gosh! O gee! I'll bet that's fun.

Now they're off! They've set their pace!

There they go! Oh, what a race!

The boy in brown is first to win—

He's receiving his ribbon. Just see him grin!

A 4-A, whose teacher had presented many poems in which repetition was stressed writes:

Boys here! Girls there!

Boys and girls everywhere!

With laughter and shout

They run about!

This is the fun of play day!

Ada Beth in the 4-A expresses something of the joy in being one of a group, if I read aright.

There is a joy in racing—

Racing up and down

With others running by you

With many a queer frown.

Each one wants a ribbon of blue.

Doesn't he? Doesn't she? Don't you?

This is the group effort of the second grade:

Colors flashing;

Racers dashing!

Children at play,

On Field Day.

Here is another situation in which we called attention to the possibilities. A 5-A class studying wheat had written a shadow play. Because their work had been influenced by the possession of an unusually beautiful picture in color of a ripened wheat field, a poetic expression seemed a natural result. This teacher had maintained that she could not write herself and therefore couldn't help anyone else. She followed rather a pattern procedure, but how remiss we would have been if the opportunity had not been given to pupils capable of writing these:

Quick, quick, the wind is blowing!

Let's go and play in the wheat.

It's winking! It's blinking!

It's waving out there in the heat.

How would you like to be wheat in the field?  
 Swaying in the waves of gold,  
 This way, that way,  
 With meadow larks nestling in the golden  
 hair of mother earth?

I wonder what the wheat thinks  
 Out in the fields so wide,  
 And what it does, and what it says  
 To the poppies and the grass.  
 I wonder what the wheat thinks  
 About the mountains and valleys  
 And what it does, and what it says  
 To the meadow larks and field mice.

There is no dearth of stimuli. The problem here lies in our developing power in recognizing them and in making them real to children.

Now what has been the teacher's part throughout this entire development? His responsibility has been two-fold; he has provided the experience, he has made it satisfying to the pupil—satisfying because his writing answered the purpose for which it was intended and because it

met the standards set—standards very carefully built up by the teacher, not only by precept but by constant example. A recent study in my school as to why pupils liked or disliked subjects resulted as follows:

Of the 808 times pupils identified reasons for liking a subject, 351 times was the answer associated with a sense of power—"I can do it well; it's fun." And 395 times was the reason for disliking stated as—"I can't do it well; it's too hard for me." Only 31 times were grades mentioned as a reason for liking, and only 22 times as a basis for disliking.

Here is the lesson for us in the elementary school; a lesson which we know all too well as teachers. When we know we are succeeding we too like what we are doing. The task is worthy of our best effort; the creative teacher guiding her group safely and happily along this trail should have envy in his heart for no one.

### RESEARCH PROBLEMS IN READING

(Continued from page 106)

system. Since achievement varies with environmental conditions, it seems desirable to have measures that indicate particular weaknesses so that the kindergarten and pre-primary teachers may have some guidance in planning instruction to overcome these weaknesses.

2. What are the elements in the child's mental and physical equipment that make for success in reading? Monroe (73) reports the following correlations of certain test results and later success in reading based on 85 first grade children:

#### CORRELATION OF READING ACHIEVEMENT AND

Visual test scores .....	$r = .60 \pm .04$
Auditory test scores .....	$r = .66 \pm .04$
Motor test scores .....	$r = .50 \pm .05$
Articulation scores .....	$r = .57 \pm .05$
Language scores .....	$r = .50 \pm .05$
Detroit Intelligence I.Q. ....	$r = .57 \pm .04$
Combined tests .....	$r = .75 \pm .03$

On 103 cases, Deputy (25) reports the

following correlations of reading readiness tests with success in first grade reading:

#### CORRELATION OF COMPOSITE SCORE ON THREE READING TESTS AND

Pintner-Cunningham test .....	$r = .70$
Visual-visual association .....	$r = .52$
Word selection test .....	$r = .49$
Visual auditory association .....	$r = .39$
Comprehension and recall .....	$r = .37$
Combined tests .....	$r = .75$

Tests of certain of these and other functions are found in studies by Van-Wagenen (97), Lee and Clark (65), Betts (6) and others. Hildreth (53) and Teegarten (92) report conflicting evidence on the effect of the tendency to make reversals on success in reading. Betts (6) suggests that certain maturations are essential and presents visual and auditory sensory and perceptual tests to determine readiness.

(To be continued)

# The Student Publication: An Integral Part of the English Program\*

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THE SCHOOL publication's justification for inclusion in the school program lies in the rich learning experiences which it offers. When we scrutinize school publication situations to evaluate these experiences and how they are capitalized, what do we find?

All too often we find the sponsoring teacher, not the student, the one who is having the rich learning experience, for it is he who plans, selects and edits, while the children become little more than cub reporters. In other situations we find the sponsoring teacher discouraged because he cannot capitalize its learning possibilities, since the school publication has been relegated to the after-school extra-curricular activity category. In still other schools the publication represents the best efforts of a chosen few because the magazine or paper is utilized, not as an actual rich learning experience for its student body, but rather as a school advertisement or as a means of "keeping up with the Joneses."

In most of these cases the educational possibilities inherent in the activity are sacrificed in the effort to perfect the end product; therefore the school paper, not the growth of children, has been the concern. Only when the teachers and the schools have vision and understanding enough to see that the school publication is an integral part of the English studies

program can all of its possibilities be capitalized. In many schools the publication has become a vital factor in the education of the children. When Governor McNutt as a student at Martinsburg High School organized the first school paper, it was a vital factor because it was student planned. Our problem this morning is that of finding how the school publication can be most effectively handled so as to derive the optimal values from the experience.

Since education is conceived as a continuous process of growing so that one may react intelligently to situations, it is conceded that it takes place best through living in actual situations. Growth comes about through clear thinking, planning, and purposeful co-operation for a common end. The publishing of a school newspaper presents such an actual situation.

Under teacher guidance—and we mean guidance, not direction—the co-operative purposeful planning can take place; the growth of children is inevitable as teacher and pupils together meet the many challenging problems which any publication presents.

In the remainder of our time we shall follow through the children's experiences in the publication of a particular school magazine and of a particular school paper in order to see just how teachers and pupils worked together in order to give children the opportunity of planning and

\* Read before the National Council of Teachers of English, Nov. 30, 1935.

sharing the responsibility for the execution of their plans.

In the past few years at Ohio State University School we have tried out various ways of having the greatest number of students share in the publication of our elementary school magazine. Last year we most nearly approached one hundred per cent participation; therefore we shall notice just how the publication of this magazine was handled.

In an elementary school assembly the magazine was discussed. There it was decided that it should contain stories about group activities, original stories, poems, book reviews, editorials, "lot of pictures and some colored ones"—this last from a primary youngster.

In that same assembly, it was decided that while most of the work of getting out our magazine could be carried on in the classrooms, we needed a committee of representatives—notice that there was no staff—from each room. At necessary intervals these representatives would meet with the art teacher in order to investigate the cost of various sizes of magazines, and the cost of colored illustrations. Also they would arrange two or three physical set-ups so that each room could then weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each plan. These plans were carried out.

Thus the various room groups had such valuable experiences as computing the sales price of our magazine if we had twelve pages or sixteen, if we had colored illustrations or black; and such experiences as the selection of the cover design, the selection of the color of the cover. Mathematics, art, English all were integrated in the solution of these and many other problems which arose.

Now let us consider the selection of the creative effort to be included in the publication. We feel that all creative work included in elementary publications should be done at school and that also it should be selected from the work already done

rather than be written for the purpose of publication. Since this is true, we could begin selection of material immediately. In each room group would-be contributors read aloud their contributions. This reading was really group editing. Some standards of evaluation were of necessity set up in each group. As a child finished reading, suggestions for change, omission, revision were made as well as appreciative comment on apt expressions and picturesque speech. This group editing weeded out errors, and brought up for consideration those points of usage for which the group had background and understanding. It made such considerations purposeful, meaningful and important. Faulty spelling and faulty punctuation the teacher should and did correct with the child or children involved; he should never let such errors get into print. Should he do more? Such corrections made, he should do no more than suggest; he should let the child revise. We agree heartily with Watterhouse who says, "Often if the teacher were to change a word or strengthen a paragraph the childish expression would be well done. Such is never a kindness to the young writer—the whole is not then his own and having it wholly one's own brings joy, confidence and self-respect."

The material thus selected in each room was labeled first, second, or third choice so that the committee would know which contributions to discard when the allotted space was filled.

Illustrative material was selected in exactly the same manner. Cover designs and editorials were the only things purposely done for this magazine.

Contributions were then sent to a typist and returned to the room group for proofing. Experience previous to this had taught that mistakes sent to the printer are costly. The proofed typed material was arranged and sent to the printer to be made into galleys.

While the galley were being set up, the fifth and sixth graders investigated proof and had simple individual proof reading guides mimeographed so that every intermediate grade child could have a copy for reference when he started reading proof.

When the galley came they were shown and explained to the kindergarten. In the primary grades teacher and pupils together read over their own room contributions and compared them with the original.

We had asked for many copies of the galley; therefore each intermediate grade child had experience reading proof. Each page was read by several children. Those with least knowledge and facility in English read first and passed each page on to stronger students. Thus not only did every child have the experience of proof reading but also the most of the errors were caught. One copy of the galley was saved for final marking. As children read proof many questions of correct style arose, so that again purposeful learning took place and the whole group benefited by the experience.

When the second galley was returned we again had many copies so that all intermediate grade children could experience the many problems of making up a dummy. They worked in groups and much pinning and discussion preceded the final pasting into place. The finished dummy was shown to all primary children.

Lastly when the magazine arrived, each room group handled the sales for that room and reported such to the office. The finished magazine was discussed and shared in assembly with suggestions for changes in the next issue.

Nor are these values possible only if one can print the paper or magazine. Two years ago the sixth grade group asked if they might have a paper. Since that year the high school was taking major respon-

sibility for our joint publication, we were not surprised that these children wanted a paper.

Immediately we discussed together the responsibilities and problems which we could foresee. Since the children were quite willing to hektograph these copies and since they wanted copies only for themselves, their teachers and other room library tables, the cost became a negligible factor. We planned just what duties there were and which persons would begin by assuming responsibility for each. We planned so that every individual had an important part in the work. The least capable member of the group became page assembler. Everyone in the sixth grade could submit articles or illustrations.

The first issue, which came out on a Friday, was written in manuscript with a ditto pencil. Later, with the help of the high school typing teacher, the group learned to type part of their material. High school students typed the rest exactly as directed by sixth graders.

The Monday following each Friday's issue, we criticized it. Wordy titles, faulty diction, poor page arrangement, uneven margins, short, uninteresting sentences were typical points discussed following the early issues. Problems of punctuation and accuracy of statement arose as the work developed.

Later many valuable discussions arose concerning such things as whether gangsters and murders were comic strip material, and what coming events in Columbus we were justified in writing about. Should we mention only those things which children ought to see and hear or should we, as city papers do, mention everything? Such problems as these led us to a consideration of the responsibility of the press; thus social responsibility in the broader aspects as well as art and English became integrated learning activities through the reconstruction of experience.

All sorts of growth took place as the group struggled with this inexpensive venture.

Now when we consider a one issue undertaking the mimeographed booklet such as one of poetry provides an equally valuable experience, for it may be handled in a similar manner.

Of course, Ohio State is but one of many schools attempting to give this vital experience to the greatest number of students. Park School in Cleveland, for example, is meeting this problem by having a mimeographed paper for which each grade group assumes full responsibility for different issues. The bibliography of school journalism, which can be secured

at the National Association for Student Editors in Washington, D.C., will probably prove most valuable to those who want to find out what is being done elsewhere.

In closing we should say that whether the publication be a magazine or a paper, whether it be printed, mimeographed or hektographed, is unimportant for in each lies the same possibilities. The important thing is that it be the children's work from the initial plan through the execution of that plan. The publication should of necessity then be an integral part of the English studies program so that the maximum number of children may participate in the experience.

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#### A NEW PROCEDURE IN TEACHING LANGUAGE

(Continued from page 93)

ter. The time allotted to each of these subjects on the day's program is combined, thus making it possible for the teacher more efficiently to give the individual assistance that is needed.

The effect of this procedure on the child himself is, I believe, of greatest importance. The expression of joy on the children's faces while at work, the feeling of pride and satisfaction as they develop power to help themselves, the gain in confidence as they attack new and more difficult work, the pleasure they derive from their feeling of authorship, the appreciation of each other's stories, their keen desire and willingness to attack each new piece of work, and the very desirable attitude toward school in general are all very evident. These children never feel that any work is too difficult for them.

Each teacher has had a free choice as to whether or not she wished to take up

this work, and after the first semester, a choice as to whether or not she wished to continue with it. Even though it demands much more work on the part of the teacher, not one, as yet, has wanted to go back to the more formal methods. Each teacher has been most co-operative and enthusiastic.

An attempt to change suddenly an entire system from a somewhat formal spelling and writing program to a procedure so informal as is this, would not be successful. Teachers need to be trained to do this work. Frequent conferences are necessary to discuss important matters and problems that arise. The work in each classroom is a study in itself. There have been problems from the beginning and there will be more and more problems as the work advances to higher grades. But, with careful study and consideration they will be solved.

# Editorial

## A Question of Social Values

THE READER of this number of THE REVIEW must be impressed with the marked tendency to combine one or more subjects with composition, focusing the children's attention not on composition or on the subjects with which it is combined, but on some other undertaking of vital and absorbing interest to them. Improvement in composition skills and in subject-matter is the valuable by-product. Mr. Wrightstone (page 94) describes the new method concisely: "A characteristic practice of the newer-type elementary schools is to integrate curricular activities around a center of interest, unit of work, or topic." His investigations confirm the value of such procedure. Thus we find children learning arithmetic, English composition, usage, and spelling with a right good will because they need these subjects in editing and publishing a school newspaper. (See Miss Williams' article, page 112.) And Mrs. Howland tells, page 90, how first and second graders eagerly strive to master handwriting and spelling because they want so much to write their charming little "stories."

As used by the authors represented in this number of THE REVIEW, this integration of learning around a center of interest is valuable. But there is the ever-present danger that an indiscriminate over-application of a good thing may destroy its usefulness, as was the case with the project-method. Activities for their own sake are not necessarily educational. It is quite possible for children to build bird-houses and to construct marionettes without any appreciable improvement in their use of English. Over-enthusiastic advocates of "activity" methods may send children off on time-consuming undertakings of little educational and no social

value. And since these projects involve much time and effort on the part of pupil and teacher, it behooves anyone about to undertake one to make sure that the subject will repay the pupils amply.

In this number there is a suggestion for just such an integrating activity. Miss Eaton, page 97, says: "It strikes me that the consumer's position is a grand one from which to view the world. It is democratic and objective, pacific and international. It is concerned with the very stuff of life itself and yet partakes rather of the philosopher's calm than of the reformer's urge." As Miss Eaton points out, the child himself is a consumer, so the interest he has in an investigation of agriculture and industry is at once personal and social. It is of necessity a group enterprise, with all that involves in lessons in co-operation. And of course the value of stirring an intelligent interest in the world around one needs no elaboration.

A large part of the responsibility for the success of such an undertaking will rest with the English teacher. Without guidance, children may easily make nuisances of themselves, asking aimless and impertinent questions. They may duplicate effort, sending off numbers of letters asking for identical material. They may keep jumbled, illegible records, and, worst of all, fail to develop the information they have laboriously acquired into any unified, practical form. The English skills demanded by such an enterprise are all practical skills—those needed in business: the ability to gain information through courteous, well-thought-out, pertinent questions; the ability to write clear, civil, business letters; the ability to take notes and to organize them; and finally, the ability to organize information into a clear report.

# Reviews and Abstracts

**Today's English.** By M. R. Trabue and Bessie Bacon Goodrich. Charles E. Merrill Company, 1935.

The new series of elementary language texts by Trabue and Goodrich will doubtless engender some opposition from the formalists. In eight major units, each built around a central theme of pupil interest, the series attempts to vitalize the language program through activities which children would normally enjoy doing.

The authors have actually succeeded in presenting something that is challenging. Large units, such as "Adventuring with Books," "Saving our Forests," and "Making Poems Live," carry the major themes of interest. Scarcely a lesson fails to include one or more worth-while things for pupils to do—things that will provide a variety of richness of social experience. Yet the authors have apparently given a vast amount of time to research of a technical nature; for a painstaking examination of the drill frequencies for numerous items of language learning shows that nothing has been omitted. Drill repetition is remarkably well spaced throughout. Conscientious attention to review of essentials and to clarity of expression characterizes the series.

Two criticisms will be made by those who consider the style of these texts to be too advanced. In the first place, it occasionally appears that the emphasis upon basic drill is not sufficiently strong. This fault seems rather too apparent at times; but the good teacher will easily supplement the drill wherever it is shown that the pupils are in need of more practice. The second criticism lies with the inability of some of the units to sustain their central themes through the entire sections that they represent.

There is nothing artificial or stilted about the interest that these books are designed to arouse in the pupils. Nothing is done that alert and intelligent young people would not find interesting and challenging. Every activity is skillfully guided and motivated. The rich, suggestive content is filled with specific language applications in a setting of the

very best of group activities. In fact, some of the language elements are actually brought in under disguise, a fact which will doubtless define the point of difference between those who like and those who dislike the series. Occasionally one wonders whether the completeness of some of the planned activities will not require so much of the pupils' time that the matter of language might be entirely neglected and forced out of the picture. The answer to this question will rest largely with the individual teacher.

Complete success marks the authors' attempt to include only such poetry and other literature as are adapted to the ages and understanding of the pupils. The material is noteworthy for its vitality and freshness. There is absolutely none of the now-tell-who-wrote-it-and-give-an-historical-resumé style of teaching. An unsuspecting child may even learn to love some of the poetry in these books.

The entire series is well integrated. Nothing that is begun is left unfinished; and the carry-over from grade to grade is clearly apparent, both in the drill materials and in the carefully prepared cumulative reviews and tests. The whole series shows scientific care in preparation.

The planning also gives a wealth of specific opportunity for the pupil to develop useful social attitudes. Every inducement is offered for self-expression.

In every respect the books are modern. One turns a few pages and finds references to modern problems, modern facts, modern people. Yet the real gems of older prose and poetry have been discriminatingly saved.

Finally, for whoever inspects these books, there awaits a genuine surprise in the matter of illustrations. Artistic, beautiful, and modern, they will unquestionably be appreciated by every child and teacher.

—*Douglas E. Lawson, Southern Illinois State Normal University, Carbondale, Illinois*

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